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EXAMINER				
PATEL, JAYESH A				
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Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

The time period for reply, if any, is set in the attached communication.

Office Action Summary

Application No.

10/531,192

Applicant(s)

OUCHI, MAKOTO

Examiner

JAYESH A. PATEL

Art Unit

2624

-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --
Period for Reply

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE 3 MONTH(S) OR THIRTY (30) DAYS, WHICHEVER IS LONGER, FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133). Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

Status

- 1) ☒ Responsive to communication(s) filed on 12 December 2008.
2a) ☒ This action is **FINAL**. 2b) ☐ This action is non-final.
3) ☐ Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

Disposition of Claims

- 4) ☒ Claim(s) 1-15 is/are pending in the application.
4a) Of the above claim(s) _____ is/are withdrawn from consideration.
5) ☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are allowed.
6) ☐ Claim(s) 1-15 is/are rejected.
7) ☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are objected to.
8) ☐ Claim(s) _____ are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

Application Papers

- 9) ☐ The specification is objected to by the Examiner.
10) ☒ The drawing(s) filed on 13 April 2005 is/are: a) ☒ accepted or b) ☐ objected to by the Examiner.
Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).
Replacement drawing sheet(s) including the correction is required if the drawing(s) is objected to. See 37 CFR 1.121(d).
11) ☐ The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner. Note the attached Office Action or form PTO-152.

Priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119

- 12) ☐ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).
a) ☐ All b) ☐ Some * c) ☐ None of:
1. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
2. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. _____.
3. ☐ Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).

* See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.

Attachment(s)

- 1) ☒ Notice of References Cited (PTO-892)
2) ☐ Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948)
3) ☐ Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO-8508)
4) ☐ Interview Summary (PTO-413)
Paper No(s)/Mail Date: _____
5) ☐ Notice of Informal Patent Application
6) ☐ Other: _____
Paper No(s)/Mail Date: _____

Response to Arguments

Applicant's amendments/remarks filed 12/12/2008 have been entered and made of record. With respect to claims 1 and 6, the applicant argues on remarks page 13 and 15 that Hsu does not disclose the feature points, the examiner disagrees. Hsu at **Col 4 lines 65 "map points between images"** which clearly shows that feature points are mapped between the images. Hsu further discloses at **Col 6 lines 47-55** where the correspondence between the points in the images which are the combination of pixels (**brightness/color pixels which are considered as feature points of the image**). Hsu further discloses the color matching/blending module 310 at lines 52-54 where the color (**feature of the images**) are mapped between the images. Hsu further discloses overlap between the images (**typically four points**) at (**Col 13 lines 18-20**) which can be interpreted as feature points. Thus from all of the above explanation Hsu clearly discloses the feature points and the correspondence between them in the images. The claim does not limit as to what type of feature points etc.

With regards to claim 14-15 the applicant is arguing the computer readable medium which as in the specification page 5, line 15 (the third full paragraph on page 5) "data signals that include such computer programs and are embodied in carrier waves" which encompasses the non statutory subject matter. The applicant is required to claim only the tangible computer readable media such as one disclosed on page 22 lines 19-25 which represents tangible computer readable recording or storage

medium. Thus the claims 14-15 should be amended with "a tangible computer readable storage medium".

Regarding claim limitations "--- executed by an integrated circuit" in claims 1,6,7,12-13, the examiner suggests amending the claims"—executed by a **processor**" because there are "integrated circuits" such as "analog integrated circuits" such as operational amplifiers, sensors etc. which do not have computational processing capacities.

Specification

The amendment filed on 12/12/2008 is objected to under 35 U.S.C. 132(a) because it introduces new matter into the disclosure. 35 U.S.C. 132(a) states that no amendment shall introduce new matter into the disclosure of the invention. The deletion of "and data signals that include such computer programs and are embodied in carrier waves" changes the scope of the invention and introduces new matter situation. The applicant is advised to undo the amendments to the specification. The specification should therefore read as follows and as originally filed.

Paragraph beginning at page 5, line 15 (the third full paragraph on page 5), with the following rewritten paragraph as originally filed on 04/13/2005:

The technique of the present invention is actualized by a variety of

applications, which include image processing methods, computer programs that attain the functions of such apparatuses and methods, and recording media in which such computer programs are recorded, and data signals that include such computer programs and are embodied in carrier waves.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 112

The following is a quotation of the first paragraph of 35 U.S.C. 112:

The specification shall contain a written description of the invention, and of the manner and process of making and using it, in such full, clear, concise, and exact terms as to enable any person skilled in the art to which it pertains, or with which it is most nearly connected, to make and use the same and shall set forth the best mode contemplated by the inventor of carrying out his invention.

Claims 1-5 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 112, first paragraph, as failing to comply with the written description requirement. The claim(s) contains subject matter which was not described in the specification in such a way as to reasonably convey to one skilled in the relevant art that the inventor(s), at the time the application was filed, had possession of the claimed invention. The newly added limitation "determined correspondence relationship in a three dimensional space" is not fully disclosed, described and supported by the specification. The specification on page 2 lines 15-16 does not describe the above claimed limitation. Figs 6 and 8 disclose the coordinate conversion; however they are for cylindrical coordinate system and do not support the spherical coordinate system or the three dimensional space claimed in claim 1. Claims 2-5 depend directly or indirectly on claim 1 and therefore they are rejected.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 101

35 U.S.C. 101 reads as follows:

Whoever invents or discovers any new and useful process, machine, manufacture, or composition of matter, or any new and useful improvement thereof, may obtain a patent therefor, subject to the conditions and requirements of this title.

The USPTO "Interim Guidelines for Examination of Patent Applications for Patent Subject Matter Eligibility" (Official Gazette notice of 22 November 2005), Annex IV, reads as follows:

Descriptive material can be characterized as either "functional descriptive material" or "nonfunctional descriptive material." In this context, "functional descriptive material" consists of data structures and computer programs which impart functionality when employed as a computer component. (The definition of "data structure" is "a physical or logical relationship among data elements, designed to support specific data manipulation functions." The New IEEE Standard Dictionary of Electrical and Electronics Terms 308 (5th ed. 1993).) "Nonfunctional descriptive material" includes but is not limited to music, literary works and a compilation or mere arrangement of data.

When functional descriptive material is recorded on some computer-readable medium it becomes structurally and functionally interrelated to the medium and will be statutory in most cases since use of technology permits the function of the descriptive material to be realized. Compare *In re Lowry*, 32 F.3d 1579, 1583-84, 32 USPQ2d 1031, 1035 (Fed. Cir. 1994) (claim to data structure stored on a computer readable medium that increases computer efficiency held statutory) and *Warmerdam*, 33 F.3d at 1360-61, 31 USPQ2d at 1759 (claim to computer having a specific data structure stored in memory held statutory product-by-process claim) with *Warmerdam*, 33 F.3d at 1361, 31 USPQ2d at 1760 (claim to a data structure per se held nonstatutory).

In contrast, a claimed computer-readable medium encoded with a computer program is a computer element which defines structural and functional interrelationships between the computer program and the rest of the computer which permit the computer program's functionality to be realized, and is thus statutory. See *Lowry*, 32 F.3d at 1583-84, 32 USPQ2d at 1035.

Regarding claims 14-15 recite a computer program product which are essentially a programs (software program) and programs per se are non statutory. The Examiner suggests claiming the tangible computer readable storage medium and not the program. Please amend the claims 14-15 to include "A tangible computer readable storage medium" at lines 6 in the body of the claim.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 103

The following is a quotation of 35 U.S.C. 103(a) which forms the basis for all obviousness rejections set forth in this Office action:

(a) A patent may not be obtained though the invention is not identically disclosed or described as set forth in section 102 of this title, if the differences between the subject matter sought to be patented and the prior art are such that the subject matter as a whole would have been obvious at the time the invention was made to a person having ordinary skill in the art to which said subject matter pertains. Patentability shall not be negated by the manner in which the invention was made.

Claims 1-3,5 ,12 and 14 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Hsu et al (US 6078701) hereafter Hsu in view of Chen et al (US 6486908) hereafter Chen as best understood by the examiner due to 112 rejections.

1. Regarding claim 1, Hsu discloses an image processing apparatus (**Figs 1-3 , an image processor which has integrated circuits executing the steps**) for generating graphics data representing a single seamless planar image synthesized from a multiple sets of graphics data contained in a plurality of graphics files, in response to the plurality of graphics files each of which contains the graphics data composed of a multiplicity of planar pixels arrayed in a plane for representing a planar image, the image processing apparatus comprising:

a feature point extractor configured to extract a feature point which is an area having a predetermined characteristic, from each of the plurality of spheroidal images (**one to one correspondence with points in the scene at Col 1 lines 48-49, Col 4 Lines 65 mapping points between image frames are the features extracted from the images and Col 6 line 54-55 where each point is in one-to-one correspondence**);

a correspondence relationship determiner configured to determine a correspondence relationship of the extracted feature points, between the plurality of spheroidal images (**Fig 9 and Col 6 lines 36-67 where the mapping is explained**);

a spheroidal image synthesizer configured to generate seamless spheroidal graphics data representing a single seamless spheroidal image, by synthesizing a plurality of graphics data each of which representing each of the spheroidal images, with reference to the determined correspondence relationship in a three dimensional space (**Fig 9, Col 14 lines 1-10 and Col 17 lines 43-62 where the three dimensional spherical mosaics are generated from two dimensional image data showing the relationship in three dimensional space**); and

a planar image generator configured to generate the graphics data representing the single seamless planar image, from the seamless spheroidal image graphics data (**Col 12 lines 63 through col 13 lines 57 where reference to image mappings constitutes the planar image from the spherical reference**). Hsu discloses area of the mosaic based on the perspective projection at **Col 6 lines 36-67 and Col 14 lines 1-5**, however does not explicitly recite a synthesis area establisher configured to establish a spheroidal projection plane centered on a predetermined point, as an area for synthesis of the multiple sets of graphics data and a spheroidal image generator configured to generate a

plurality of spheroidal images, by projecting each of planar images represented by each of the multiple sets of graphics data onto the projection plane.

Chen discloses a synthesis area establisher configured to establish a spheroidal projection plane centered on a predetermined point, as an area for synthesis of the multiple sets of graphics data and a spheroidal image generator configured to generate a plurality of spheroidal images, by projecting each of planar images represented by each of the multiple sets of graphics data onto the projection plane (**Figs 13,14 and 19 where the area or the rectangle determines the number of images can fit and a rectangular (planar) image can be used to represent the spherical environment map at Col 6 lines 42-43, abstract also discloses the number of photographs required using the center point of each photographs**). Chen discloses an apparatus (**Fig 1 apparatus with processor which has integrated circuits for processing**) and further discloses that the method and system as disclosed builds the spherical panoramas based on the focal length of the camera, the height of the film and the overlapping ratio between the films thus avoiding the use of fish eye lens giving a better panorama at **Col 2 lines 39-50**. Hsu and Chen together would meet the limitations of wherein each of the synthesis area establisher, the spheroidal image generator, the feature point extractor, the correspondence relationship determiner, the spheroidal image synthesizer, and the planar image generator is executed by an integrated circuit (**processors**). Hsu and Chen are from the same field of endeavor and are analogous art, therefore it would be

obvious for one of ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to use the teachings of Chen in the apparatus of Hsu for the above reasons.

2. Regarding claim 2, Hsu and Chen disclose the image processing apparatus in accordance with claim 1. Chen further disclose wherein the plurality of graphics files further include image attribute information which is attribute information of the graphics data (**film height a, film width b, and focal length are the attributes Col 7 lines 20-25**), a focal length distance determiner being executed by an integrated circuit (**Fig 1 processor**), wherein the image processing apparatus further comprises a focal distance determiner configured to determine a focal distance of an optical system used to generate the multiple sets of graphics data for each of the multiple set of graphics data (**focal length of the camera system col 2 lines 64**), in response to the image attribute information; and the spheroidal image generator generates the plurality of spheroidal images by projecting each planar image represented by each of the multiple sets of graphics data onto the projection plane, the each planar images being placed at a location away from the predetermined point to the projection plane side, by the focal distance corresponding to each of the multiple sets of graphics data (**the number of circles landscape is the planar determination of the images using the focal length of the camera at col 2 lines 53-60**).

3. Regarding claim 3, Hsu and Chen disclose the image processing apparatus in

accordance with claim 2. Chen discloses further the focal distance of the camera at **(Col 2 lines 53 through Col 3)**, focal plane resolution, pixel size width and heights at **(Col 6 lines 41-56)**.

4 Regarding claim 5, Hsu and Chen discloses and apparatus in accordance to claim 2. Chen discloses further the focal plane resolutions at **(Col 6 Lines 12-56)**. Chen discloses further the focal length and the angle **(180 degree)** divided by the focal length (f) at **(Col 7 Lines 47-50)**.

5. Claim 12 is a corresponding method claim of claim 1. See the explanation of claim 1.

6. Claim 14 is a corresponding computer program product claim of claim 1. See the explanation of claim 1.

Claims 6, 8 and 13 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Lipscomb (US 6031541) hereafter Lipscomb in view of Hsu.

7. Regarding Claim 6, Lipscomb discloses an image processing apparatus **(Fig 1)** for generating graphics data representing a single seamless planar image synthesized from a multiple sets of graphics data contained in a plurality of graphics files, in response to the plurality of graphics files each of which contains

the graphics data composed of a multiplicity of planar pixels arrayed in a plane for representing a planar image, the image processing apparatus comprising:

a synthesis area establisher configured to establish a cylindrical projection plane centered on a predetermined axis, as an area for synthesis of the multiple sets of graphics data (**Fig 12 which shows the number of pictures needed and constitutes the area of the mosaic, Figs 3 and 4 shows multiple rectangular areas and the axis and projections with respect to the cylinder**);

a cylindrical image generator configured to generate a plurality of cylindrical images, by projecting each of planar images represented by each of the multiple sets of graphics data onto the projection plane (**Figs 5 and 12 which shows multiple cylindrical images projected and aligned in form of a mosaic in fig 12**); a cylindrical image synthesizer configured to generate seamless cylindrical graphics data representing a single seamless cylindrical image, by synthesizing a plurality of graphics data each of which representing each of the cylindrical images, with reference to the determined correspondence relationship in a three dimensional space (**Fig 13 shows the mapping of the input image into the cylindrical coordinates which is a three dimensional spacem, Col 6 lines 55-60**); and a planar image generator configured to generate the graphics data representing the single seamless planar image, from the seamless cylindrical image graphics data at (**Col 6 lines 21-30 where the cylinder is "unrolled" to for a large planar rectangle consisting of the panoramic graphics image**). Lipscomb discloses the color extraction (**color of**

the panoramic scene at Col 2 line 67 through Col 3 lines 1 and Col 10 lines 35-47 explains the color features) and the correspondence mapping at **(Fig 20 elements 205-207 the correspondence between the images are determined)**, however does not expressly recite a feature point extractor configured to extract a feature point which is an area having a predetermined characteristic, from each of the plurality of cylindrical images and a correspondence relationship determiner configured to determine a correspondence relationship of the extracted feature points, between the plurality of cylindrical images.

Hsu discloses a feature point extractor configured to extract a feature point which is an area having a predetermined characteristic, from each of the plurality of cylindrical images and a correspondence relationship determiner configured to determine a correspondence relationship of the extracted feature points, between the plurality of cylindrical images **(one to one correspondence with points in the scene at Col 1 lines 48-49, Col 4 Lines 65 mapping points between image frames are the features extracted from the images, Col 4 lines 56-57 where cylindrical surface is disclosed and Col 6 line 54-55 where each point is in one-to-one correspondence)**. Lipscomb discloses an apparatus **(Fig 1 apparatus with (cpu) processor which has integrated circuits for processing)** and further discloses that the method and system as disclosed builds the cylindrical panoramas as seen in **Fig 12**. Hsu discloses the apparatus with integrated circuits at **(Figs 1-3 , an image processor which has integrated circuits executing the steps)**. Lipscomb and Hsu together would

therefore meet the limitations of wherein each of the synthesis area establisher, the cylindrical image generator, the feature point extractor, the correspondence relationship determiner, the cylindrical image synthesizer, and the planar image generator is executed by an integrated circuit (**processors**). Hsu discloses that the system and method as disclosed accurately constructs seamless panoramic image from the sequence of images using topology, global registration at **(Col 2 Lines 53-60)**. Therefore it would be obvious for one of ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to have used the teachings of Hsu in the apparatus of Lipscomb to achieve the claimed invention.

8. Regarding claim 8, Lipscomb and Hsu disclose the image processing apparatus in accordance with claim 6. Lipscomb discloses further wherein the cylindrical image generator establishes the axis parallel to the height direction established in the graphics data **(Fig 18 where the axis of the cylinder is parallel to the height of the images)**.

9. Claim 13 is a corresponding method claim of claim 6. See the explanation of claim 6.

Claim 4 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Hsu in view of Chen and in further view of Muramatsu. (US 5438380) hereafter Muramatsu.

10. Regarding claim 4, Hsu and Chen disclose the image processing apparatus in accordance with claim 2. Hsu and Chen both disclose photographic films (**for eg Chen Col 3 Lines 59-67**). Chen further discloses the spheroidal image generator determines 35 mm film size as a size of the planar image (**Figs 13,14 and 19 where the area or the rectangle determines the number of images can fit and a rectangular (planar) image can be used to represent the spherical environment map at Col 6 lines 42-43, abstract also discloses the number of photographs required using the center point of each photographs**), discloses the focal length of the camera system and the film height and the width (**at col 3 Lines 1-18**) however do not expressly recite wherein the image attribute information includes 35 mm-equivalent lens focal distance which is a value of focal distance converted to a 35 mm film camera basis; the focal distance determiner determines the 35 mm-equivalent lens focal distance to be the focal distance.

Muramatsu discloses the focal distance (length) of the film from 25mm to 35 mm and the image reproduced (**Col 2 lines 18**). Muramatsu discloses that the camera provides aspect ratio of good appearance of the photographic images when used in panoramic format (**Col 1 lines 40-45 and 55-56**). Muramatsu, Hsu and Chen are from the same field of endeavor and are analogous art, therefore it would be obvious for one of ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was

made to have used the teachings of Muramatsu in the apparatus of Hsu and Chen for the above reasons.

Claims 7, 9, 11 and 15 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Lipscomb in view of Hsu and in further view of Chen.

11. Regarding claim 7, Lipscomb and Hsu disclose the image processing apparatus in accordance with claim 6. Lipscomb discloses the attributes of the images such as height and width of the images (**Figs 18,19**) being used in the panorama construction. Lipscomb and Hsu are silent and however do not expressly disclose wherein the plurality of graphics files further include image attribute information which is attribute information of the graphics data, wherein the image processing apparatus further comprises a focal distance determiner configured to determine a focal distance of an optical system used to generate the multiple sets of graphics data for each of the multiple set of graphics data, in response to the image attribute information; and the cylindrical image generator generates the plurality of cylindrical images by projecting each planar image represented by each of the multiple sets of graphics data onto the projection plane, the each planar images being placed at a location away from the predetermined axis to the projection plane side, by the focal distance corresponding to each of the multiple sets of graphics data.

Chen discloses the focal length of the camera system (**Col 3 lines 10 computed using an integrated circuit (Fig 20 processor)**) and constructs a warped images of each of the photographic images using the attributes (**color**) at (**Col 3 lines 55-60, Col 12 lines 1-32**) and thus constructing a seamless spherical image from the warped images and thus one of ordinary skill in the art would be able to extend the teachings of Chen in construction of cylindrical panoramas. Even the height and width of the film can be understood as the attributes. Chen discloses that the method and system as disclosed builds the spherical panoramas based on the focal length of the camera, the height of the film and the overlapping ratio between the films thus avoiding the use of fish eye lens giving a better panorama at **Col 2 lines 39-50**. Lipscomb, Hsu and Chen are from the same field of endeavor and are analogous art, therefore it would be obvious for one of ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to use the teachings of Chen in the apparatus of Lipscomb and Hsu for the above reasons.

12. Regarding claim 9, Lipscomb, Hsu and Chen disclose the image processing apparatus in accordance with claim 7. Lipscomb discloses further pixel or image height at (**Col 12 lines 1-3**), pixel width direction at (**Col 13 lines 1-12**). Chen also discloses the focal plane resolutions at (**Col 6 Lines 12-56**).

13. Regarding claim 11, see the explanation of claim 9 and also see the angle over width calculation at **(Col 13 line 42 in Lipscomb)**.

14. Claim 15 is a corresponding computer program product claim of claim 6. See the explanation of claim 6.

Claim 10 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Lipscomb, Hsu, Chen and in further view of Muramatsu.

15. Regarding claim 10, Lipscomb, Hsu and Chen disclose the image processing apparatus in accordance with claim 7. Lipscomb, Hsu and Chen discloses the photographic film however do not expressly recite 35 mm film size. Muramatsu discloses the focal distance (length) of the film from 25mm to 35 mm and the image reproduced **(Col 2 lines 18)**. Muramatsu discloses that the camera provides aspect ratio of good appearance of the photographic images when used in panoramic format **(Col 1 lines 40-45 and 55-56)**. Muramatsu, Lipscomb, Hsu and Chen are from the same field of endeavor and are analogous art, therefore it would be obvious for one of ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to have used the teachings of Muramatsu in the apparatus of Lipscomb, Hsu and Chen for the above reasons.

Other Cited Prior art

The other cited prior art made of record but not relied on are (US 6532037), (US 6011558), (US 5396583), (US 6002430), (US 20030117488), (US 6028584), (US 5963213), (US 6891561), (US 20020154812), (US 6995790) and (US 20040247173).

Conclusion

Applicant's amendment necessitated the new ground(s) of rejection presented in this Office action. Accordingly, **THIS ACTION IS MADE FINAL**. See MPEP § 706.07(a). Applicant is reminded of the extension of time policy as set forth in 37 CFR 1.136(a). A shortened statutory period for reply to this final action is set to expire THREE MONTHS from the mailing date of this action. In the event a first reply is filed within TWO MONTHS of the mailing date of this final action and the advisory action is not mailed until after the end of the THREE-MONTH shortened statutory period, then the shortened statutory period will expire on the date the advisory action is mailed, and any extension fee pursuant to 37 CFR 1.136(a) will be calculated from the mailing date of the advisory action. In no event, however, will the statutory period for reply expire later than SIX MONTHS from the date of this final action.

Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to JAYESH A. PATEL whose telephone number is (571)270-1227. The examiner can normally be reached on M-F 7.00am to

4.30 pm (5-4-9). If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, Brian Werner can be reached on 571-272-7401. The fax phone number for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned is 571-273-8300. Information regarding the status of an application may be obtained from the Patent Application Information Retrieval (PAIR) system. Status information for published applications may be obtained from either Private PAIR or Public PAIR. Status information for unpublished applications is available through Private PAIR only. For more information about the PAIR system, see <http://pair-direct.uspto.gov>. Should you have questions on access to the Private PAIR system, contact the Electronic Business Center (EBC) at 866-217-9197 (toll-free). If you would like assistance from a USPTO Customer Service Representative or access to the automated information system, call 800-786-9199 (IN USA OR CANADA) or 571-272-1000.

03/26/2009
/Jayesh A Patel/
Examiner, Art Unit 2624

/Brian P. Werner/
Supervisory Patent Examiner, Art Unit 2624